

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed on October 13, 2005. Claims 1-22 were pending in the Application and the Examiner rejected all claims. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection.

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 6,901,430 (the Smith Patent). Of the rejected claims, claims 1, 9 and 15 are independent claims.

The present invention deals with using instant messaging in a business context, in order to obtain business information. For instance, independent claim 1 is drawn to a communication system for communicating business information from a first business to a second business. The communication system includes an instant messaging component configured to receive, as an instant message, a business information access request from the second business and generating an output based on a business information access request. The communication system also includes a data store storing the business information and a data store accessing system for accessing the data store based on the output from the instant messaging component. Independent claim 9 is drawn to a system for communicating with a remote business. The system includes "a user interface component configured to display an indication of the remote business and a plurality of features corresponding to the remote business..." and to receive a user input selecting a feature corresponding to the business information request. The system also includes "an instant messaging component,... configured to receive an indication of the business information request, generate the business information request as an instant message, and transmit the instant message to the remote business." Independent claim 15 is drawn to a method in a first business, of communicating with a second business. The method includes "receiving an instant message

indicative of a data access operation requested by the second business; generating a data store access operation request based on the instant message received; and performing the data access operation on a business data store...". The reference cited by the Examiner simply fails to teach or suggest these claims.

Nowhere does the Smith reference even mention instant messaging. While the Smith reference does mention "messages", Applicant is not merely claiming the use of any type of "messages" in a business context. Instead, Applicant is specifically claiming "an instant messaging component" or method steps including "instant messaging". This is simply neither taught nor suggested by Smith.

Instead, Smith appears to be nothing more than a web service system which allows a user to log onto a web page, specify search criteria (such as vehicle model, make, color, etc.) and submit a search request to a system that identifies products fulfilling the search criteria. Indeed, in order to meet every "instant messaging" limitation in the present claims, the Examiner cited column 3, lines 35-37 of Smith. Those lines specifically state "the system includes a locate client process operable to receive product configuration data and generate a search request message incorporating the product configuration data in response to user input, and an inventory database storing product availability data in the enterprise production pipeline and in inventory." This seems to clearly indicate a web service based system which receives search criteria from the user and launches a search against a database to attempt to identify products fulfilling the search request.

Of course, there are significant differences between a web services approach to allowing customers to search for products, and using instant messaging. A number of those differences are discussed in the background portion of the present application. The web services mechanisms are often much

more cumbersome to use, require a great deal more work on behalf of the user, and can even require more substantive knowledge regarding the particular data processing systems involved, then does instant messaging.

Because Smith neither teaches nor suggests, nor even mentions, instant messaging, Applicant submits that independent claims 1, 9 and 15 are allowable over Smith. Further, Applicant submits that dependent claims 2-8, 10-14 and 16-22 are allowable by virtue of their dependence from allowable independent claims. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-22 are respectfully requested.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTMAN, CHAMPLIN & KELLY, P.A.

By: 

Joseph R. Kelly, Reg. No. 34,847
Suite 1400 - International Centre
900 Second Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-3319
Phone: (612) 334-3222 Fax: (612) 334-3312

JRK:slg